VIRGINIA MAIN Street
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Main Street Intersections

First Impressions are Lasting Impressions...

WAYFINDING

Staunton, Virginia
Wednesday July 13, 2016

Wayfinding
with frazier associates

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Today's Agenda

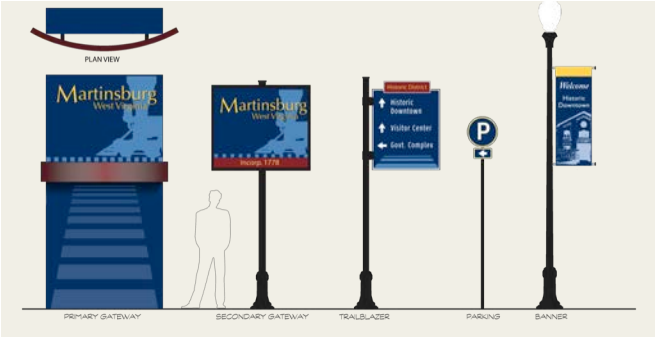
- Part 1 - What is Wayfinding?
- Part 2 – Pre-Design Considerations
- Part 3 - The Design and Implementation Process
- Part 4 – Bringing It Back to Main Street: Questions and Answers

Part 1

What is Wayfinding?

What is a Wayfinding Sign System?

- A comprehensive and unified directional sign system
- Design is customized to the community



Why have wayfinding systems become so popular?

- Road systems post-WWII were designed to bypass obstacles like… downtown!
- We have worked *REALLY* hard to bring downtown and our historic districts back to life and…
- We want our visitors to find our downtown!

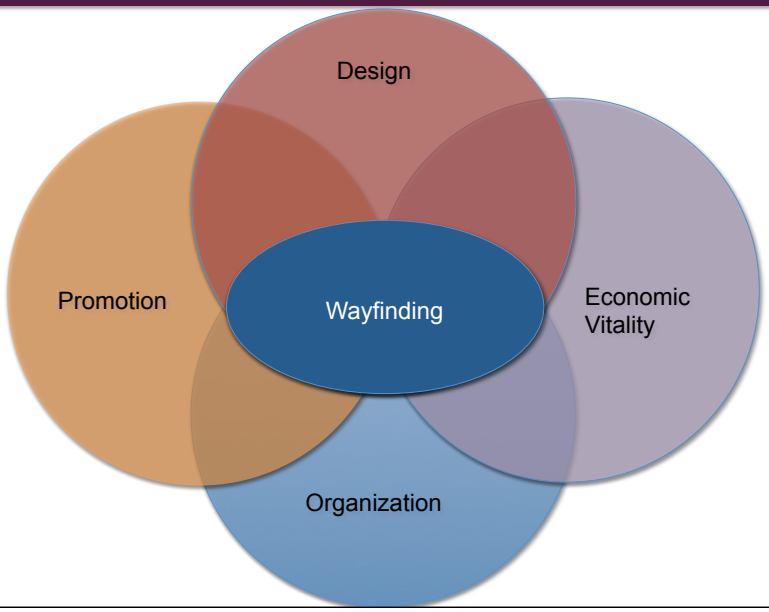
Existing Conditions

- Utilitarian, standard signs that do not reflect the community
- Signs are neither coordinated or consistent
- Sign clutter
- Multiple - and often confusing- entrances, corridors, bypasses

Wayfinding Goals

- Welcome and orient visitors (arrival)
- Provide Sense of Place (community character, history, brand)
- Guide to major destinations (a continuous "seamless" experience)
- Support tourism & ER efforts
- Comprehensive and well-coordinated
- Meet specific needs and be cost-effective

Wayfinding Relates to Main Street



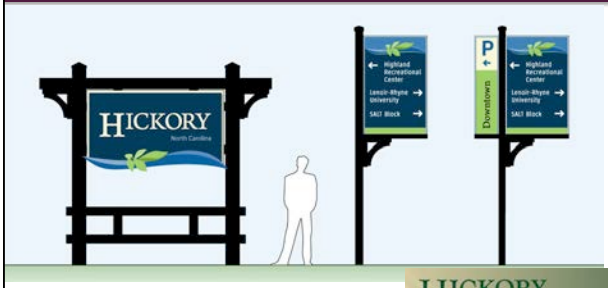
Wayfinding Components: "Website to On-site"

Web/Print Oriented
- Mobile Apps/GPS
- Websites
- Brochures & Tear-off Maps

Auto Oriented
- Highway Signs (DOT)
- Gateway Signs (Custom)
- Trailblazer Signs
- Parking Signs
- Street/District ID Signs
- Banners
- Temporary Signs

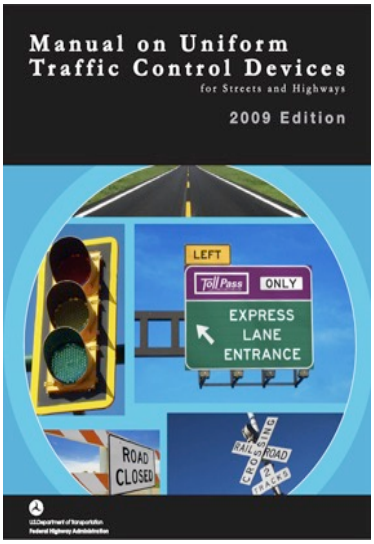
Pedestrian Oriented
- Pedestrian Directional Signs
- Information Kiosks

Sample Sign-Web Coordination



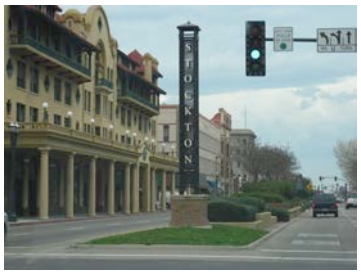
Standard DOT Highway Signs

- MUTCD
  - Uniformity
  - Standardization
  - Continuity
  - Ease of Review
- *but no local character*



Gateway Signs

- Most communities have custom gateway signs



Vehicular Trailblazer Signs – *A Key Wayfinding Sign Component*

Readability, readability, readability….

Parking Directional

Street Signs: Marking Districts

Banners

Pedestrian Wayfinding Components

Two-sided Kiosk with Permanent and Changeable panels

Pedestrian Maps

Multi-sided Kiosk with Permanent and Changeable Panels

Pedestrian Maps and Pedestrian Directional Signs

Sample Wayfinding System

VIRGINIA MAIN Street

Part 2

Pre-Design Considerations

Pre-Design Steps to Consider…

1. Scope – What does your community actually need?
2. Stakeholders
3. Brand
4. Budget and Funding
5. Hiring a Consultant
6. Coordination with VDOT

1. Scope

- Is tourism an important aspect of the economic vitality of your downtown and community?
- Do you have multiple visitor destinations beyond downtown?
- Do you have multiple (and/or confusing) routes to destinations and through your community?
- Do you have a lot of directional sign clutter?
- Would your community benefit from the sense of place and unified image wayfinding can help provide?
- Do you have the infrastructure to support planning, implementing and maintaining a system?

1. Scope – Regional Considerations

- Is your community part of a larger tourism area?
- Would joining forces with other communities and the region create economy and synergy?
- Is there a catalytic new development in the region or in your town where others in the region could benefit from a unified effort?

2. Stakeholders

- Main Street Organization
- Community Government
  - Planning
  - Public Works
  - Economic Development
- Other Organizations
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Visitors Center
- Major Tourist Attractions
- Historic/Design Review Board
- Department of Transportation

3. Brand

- Has the community, region or town been branded?
- Is it current and relevant?
- Is the brand used on website and apps?
- Brands evolve and change
  - Brand graphics in print can be changed easily
  - Wayfinding signs are in the ground for many years
- If branding is planned/desired, consider holding on wayfinding

4. Budget and Funding

What will it cost?

- Design cost will depend on size and scope of project - $40,000 and up
- Implementation costs depend on size and scope but plan on several hundred-thousand dollars

Sources

- Tourism $
- Bonds
- Transportation Enhancement
- General Funds
- Other grant sources

5. Hiring Wayfinding Consultants and Engineers

- Team Makeup
- Scope
- Fee
- Budget for Implementation
- Schedule

Part 3

Wayfinding Design Process

Typical Design Process

"The Creative Phase"

- Task 1: Information Gathering
- Task 2: Design Sign Elements
- Task 3: Signage Types, Content and Placement

"Documentation & Implementation Phase"

- Task 4: Construction Intent Documents & Bid Documents
- Task 5: Implementation

Task 1 – Information Gathering

- Establish Wayfinding Task Group (representatives of Stakeholders)
- Set Goals and Budget
- Document Existing Signs
- Determine Destinations
- Experience Travel Routes
- Review DOT requirements
- Understand Community Design Character

Destinations: Selection Criteria

- Size of attraction
- Number of outside visitors
- Hours/Season of operation
- Destinations where visitors can get more information

Typically *not* signed in a custom system

- Individual businesses
- Hospitals
- Airports

Sample Destinations

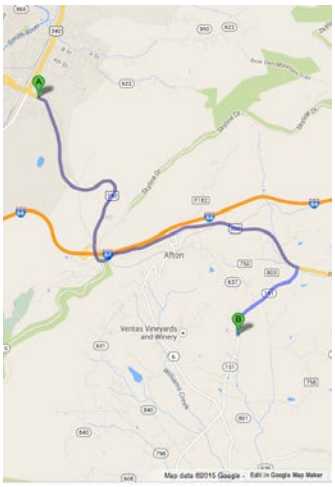
Primary

- Historic Downtown
- Visitors Center
- Other *large* visitor attractions

Secondary

- Museums
- Cultural Attractions
- Parks
- Farmers Market
- Government Centers
- Library
- Higher Education Institutes

Travel Routes

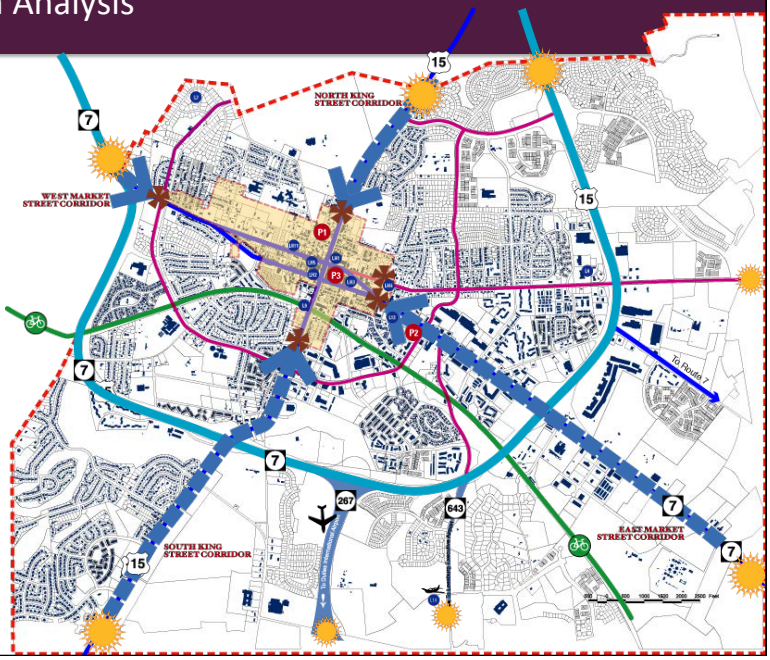


Google and other Apps

- Research is showing that more and more, apps are used to navigate
- Almost 50% of smart phone owners use them for directions
- How do they bring visitors to your destinations?

Circulation Analysis

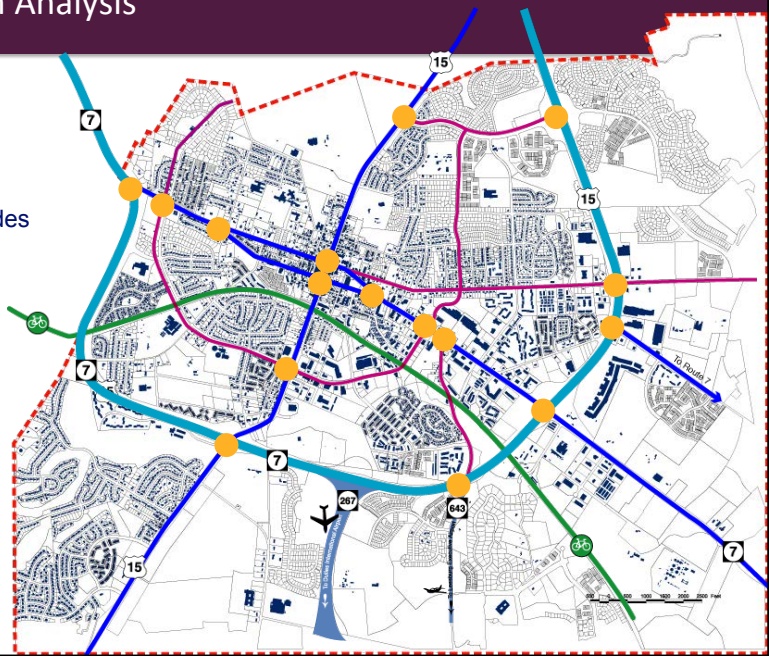
- Routes
- Gateways
- Destinations



© Frazier Associates.

Circulation Analysis

- Decision Nodes



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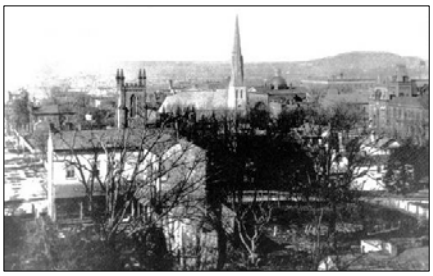
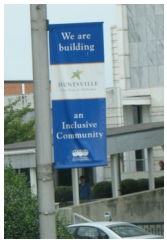
Community Character



Existing Signs



Experience Your Town

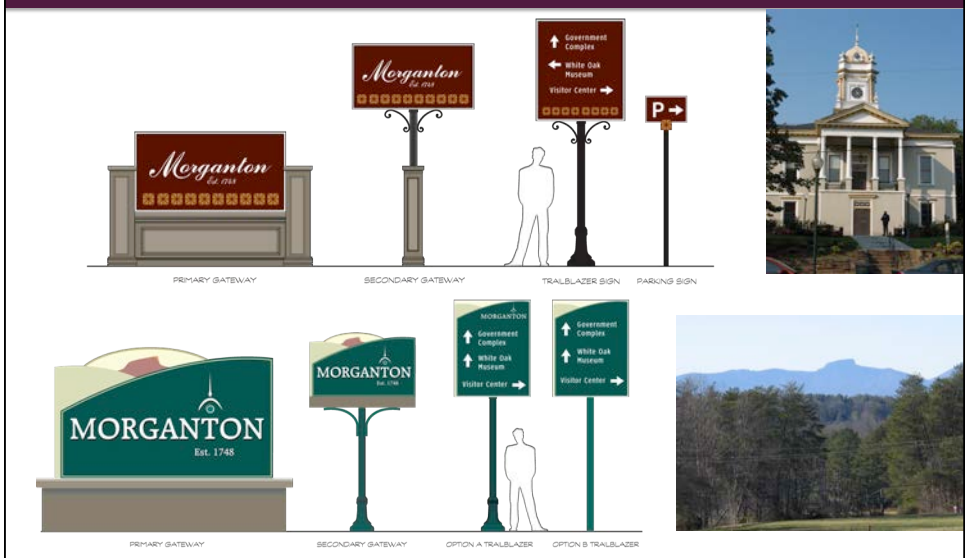
- Evaluate the visitor experience
- Drive like a visitor
- Make a visual assessment
- Take pictures
- Is it a straight shot to downtown or a convoluted route (left turns)?
- Is it welcoming and inviting?
- Corridor improvements needed?

A Staunton Story

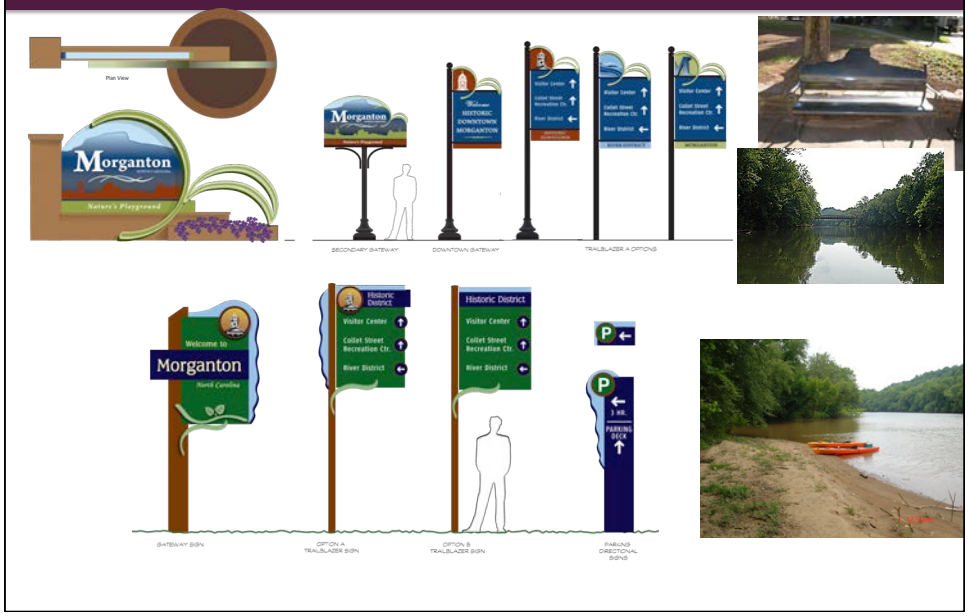
Task 2 – Schematic Design

- Design Options
- Photo-simulations
- Public Input
- Local Design Review Board Coordination
- Selection of preferred schematic option, scope, phasing and budget

Schematic Design Options



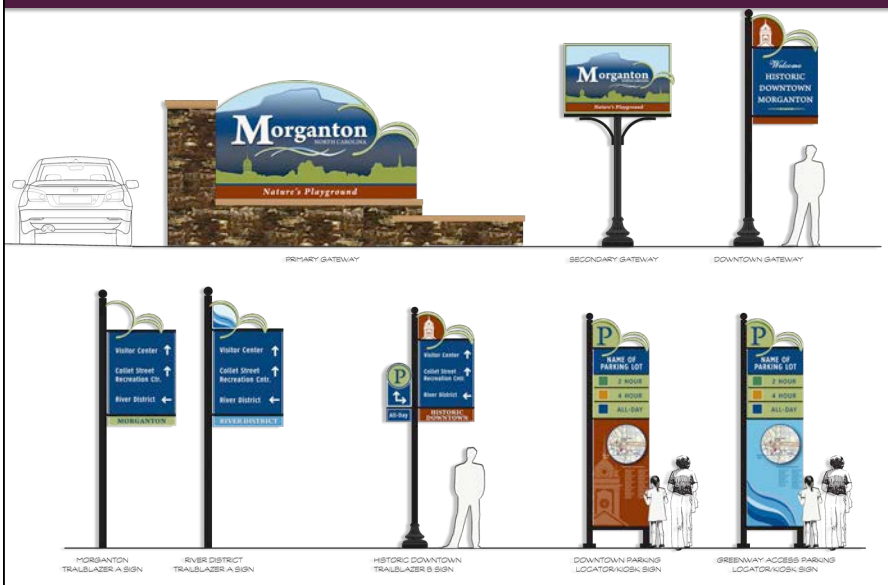
Schematic Design Options



Engage the Public; Visualize the Results

- Public presentation.
- Display sign designs in public location with a comment box.
- Use "Survey Monkey"

Final Design



Some Things to Keep in Mind

- Brand graphics in print can be changed easily; wayfinding signs are in the ground for many years. Use gateway signs for brand.
- Readability is key for trailblazers. These signs are BIG. Don't be talked into smaller signs; they aren't readable and therefore useless.
- Keep the number of destinations to 3 on big signs (above 25 mph), 4 on smaller signs.
- Color coding is not intuitive in Wayfinding Signs.

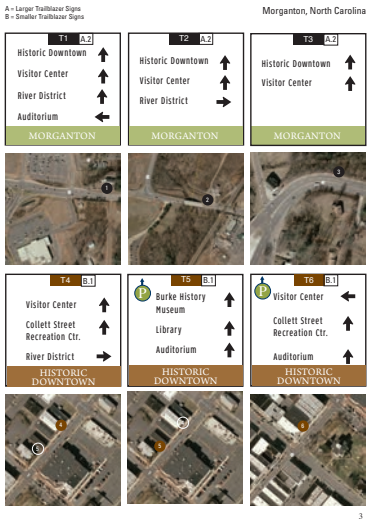
Using the Brand

Lettering Size and Readability

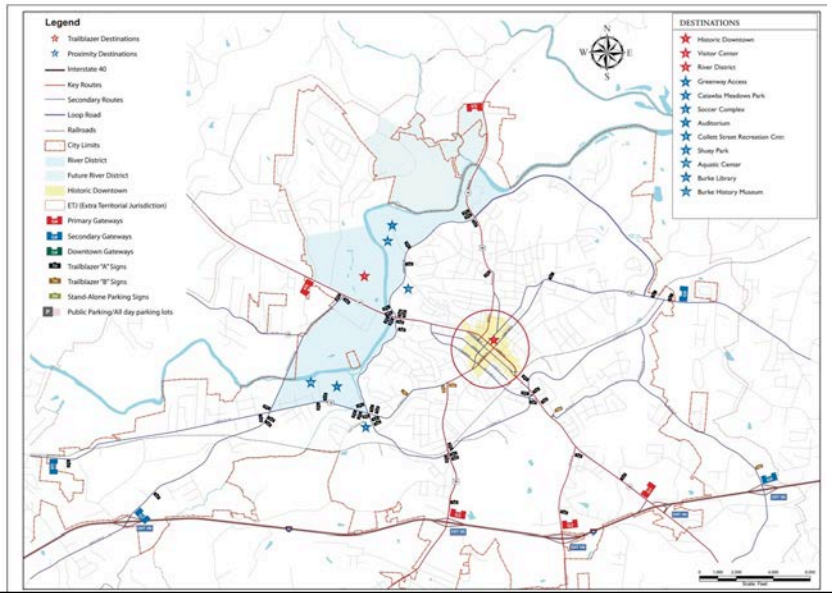
Color Coding

Task 3 – Sign Programming

- Best routes for Visitors
- Connectivity between destinations
- Sign schedule
- Sign Location Mapping
- Coordination with DOT, Public Works



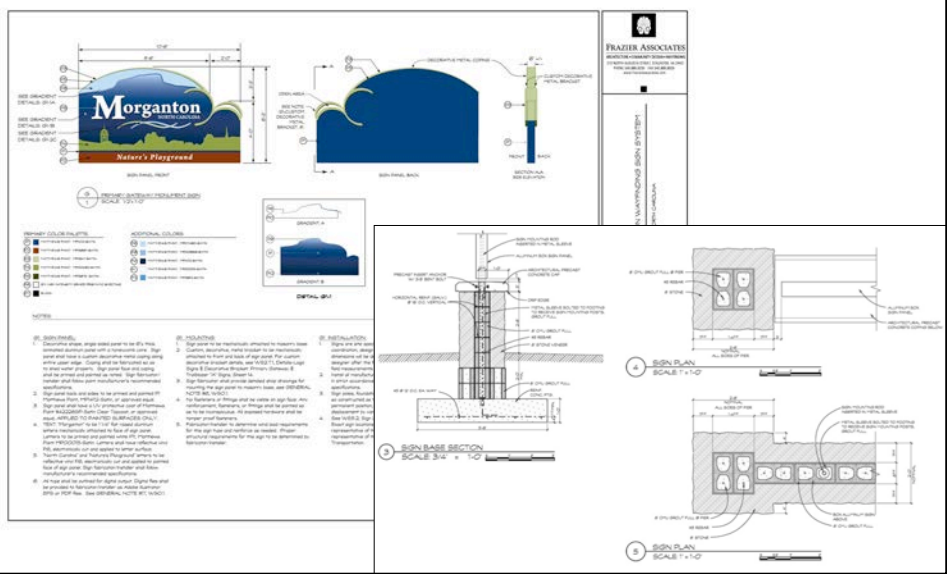
Task 3 – Sign Location Mapping



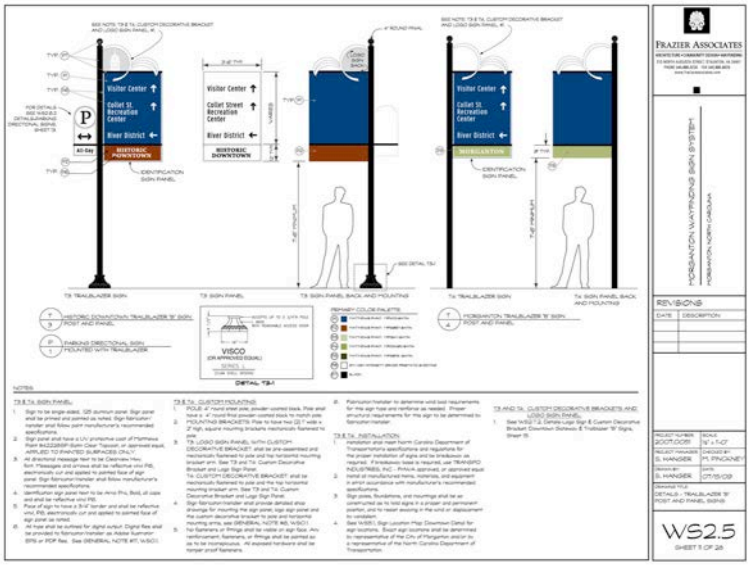
Task 4 – Construction Intent Documents

- Detailed drawing and specifications
- Structural details
- Final Sign locations map
- Phasing Plan

Task 4 – Construction Intent Documents

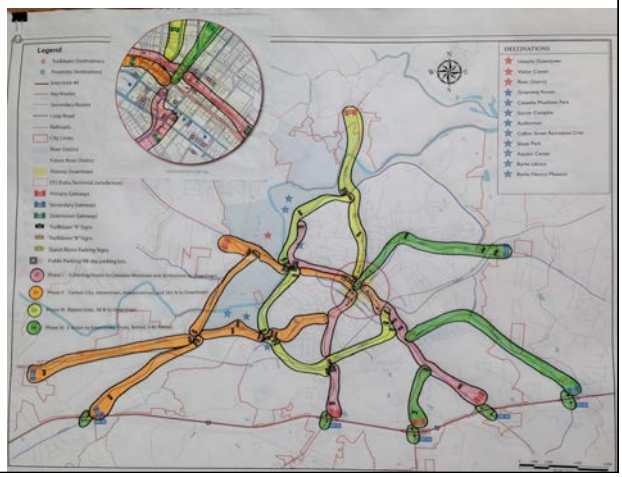


Task 4 – Construction Intent Documents



Task 5 - Implementation

- Phasing Plan
- Implementation
  - Bidding
  - Fabrication
  - Installation



Installed Signs

When you need to get the VDOT on Board

Does VDOT maintain your roads?

If yes, then custom wayfinding is not allowed at this time

- Notes on VDOT review process

If no, then you can plan and implement without VDOT in the process

Sample System: Portsmouth, VA

Portsmouth Gateway and Wayfinding Sign System

Portsmouth, Virginia

The City of Portsmouth Virginia had completed a branding and logo development process that reflected its maritime heritage when it hired Frazier Associates to design a comprehensive wayfinding sign system.

Frazier Associates had previously been working with the city on an urban design projects including a corridor streetscape manual as well as design guidelines for their five residential historic districts. The city was interested in integrating the various rural facilities in their area with the larger Portsmouth community and visualized a wayfinding sign system as one component of that integration.

Additionally, Frazier Associates was tasked with combining the signs of a previous smaller scale system with this larger, community-wide comprehensive program. Recognizing the fact that a wayfinding system will often outlive a brand or logo, it was important to utilize elements of the logo that would appear timeless.

The resulting installed sign system accomplishes all of the goals of the project, will remain attractive, and continue to complement future brand updates.

WELCOME TO PORTSMOUTH

PORTSMOUTH

Primary and secondary Gateway Signs seamlessly integrate elements of the recent branding project into a timeless design that will serve the community for years to come.

Trailblazing and Parking Signs incorporate branded image and destination information to allow a visitor ease of navigation within the larger Portsmouth community.

continued

Portsmouth Gateway and Wayfinding Sign System

Portsmouth, Virginia

WELCOME TO PORTSMOUTH

Installed Gateway Sign.

Installed Trailblazing and Parking Sign.

Frazier Associates also designed Historic District Signs to inform the public of the unique character of each district while maintaining an overall connectivity throughout the community.

CHADWICK

OLDE TOWNE

PARK VIEW

PORT NORFOLK

OLDSTON

HISTORIC DISTRICT GATEWAY SIGNS

Sample System: Highlands, NC

Highlands Branding and Wayfinding Study

Highlands, North Carolina

The Town of Highlands, North Carolina located in the southwest corner of the state is blessed with abundant natural resources in the midst of the Nanhala National Forest. The town prides itself on its magnificent mountain scenery, pure water sheds, and a bustling historic downtown. These resources create immense tourist traffic between June and December when the town swells from 1,000 residents to nearly 15,000.

To better direct these visitors and promote their natural and cultural attractions, the Town of Highlands contracted with Frazier Associates and Arnett Muldrow and Associates to create a branding program, along with a system of directional and informational wayfinding. Arnett Muldrow conducted an intense resource visit, meeting with local stakeholders and town officials, to develop the new brand. Frazier Associates then created a wayfinding system, to include design options for gateway, trailblazer, parking, pedestrian, and kiosk signs. The result was an image and signage plan that conveys the town's natural mountain beauty and promotes its many attractions.

HIGHLANDS

The Wayfinding Sign System incorporated the new brand, and included gateway, vehicular and pedestrian sign designs.

continued

Highlands Branding and Wayfinding Study

Highlands, North Carolina

Additional sign designs in the system included kiosks and civic organization signs as shown below and in the photosimulacion at right.

Signs were recently installed throughout Highlands, NC.

HIGHLANDS

HIGHLANDS

Details above and right of the gateway sign.

Sample System: Leesburg, VA

Leesburg

Type:
Community Wayfinding Signs

Reference:
Betsy Fields
Town of Leesburg
25 West Market Street
Leesburg, VA 20178
(703) 737-7019
ecordav@leesburgva.gov

Leesburg Wayfinding Sign System

Leesburg, Virginia

Leesburg offers a vibrant business district with small town appeal. The town is situated only minutes from Washington, D.C. and Dulles International Airport. The attractiveness of its downtown is attributed to the quaint atmosphere, the human scale of its buildings and streets, and slow vehicular traffic. However, just beyond the bypass that defines the heart of Leesburg, the scale instantly increases with large subdivisions, multiple lane roads, and higher vehicular speeds. In creating a comprehensive sign system for the town, both areas needed to be addressed. Most importantly, visitor traffic had to be captured and redirected downtown.

A sign committee was created to assist in the development of the design and programming of the sign system. The basic sign system includes gateway entry signs, trailblazer signs that direct visitors to three primary destinations, then proximity signs that directed visitors to specific local attractions. Complementing the basic sign system are historic district gateway signage, special events signage, celebratory signage, a kiosk for pedestrian level signage and additional interior parking signage for the Town Hall parking garage. The fabrication of the different sign systems is divided into three phases based on their priority of installation.

Leesburg Wayfinding Sign System.

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continued

Sample System: Union, SC

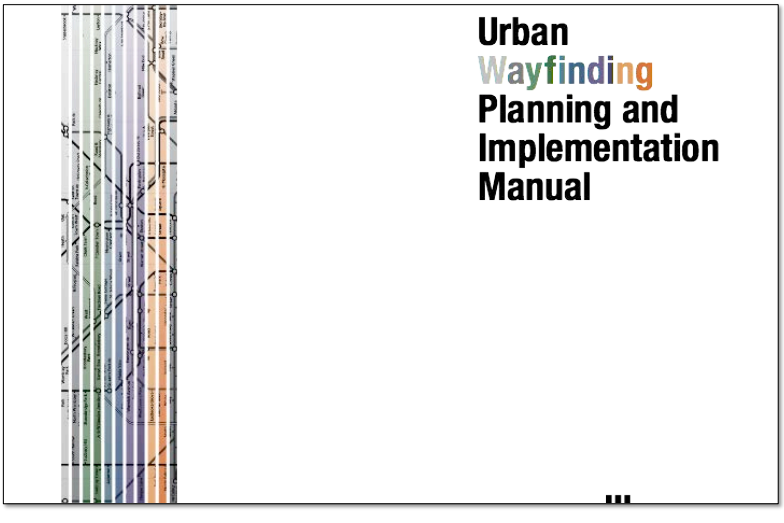
Part 4

Bringing it Back to Main Street

Questions and Answers

Another Resource:

www.thesignagefoundation.org



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Thank you!